NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

5

CHIKA SHIOMI

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS 5

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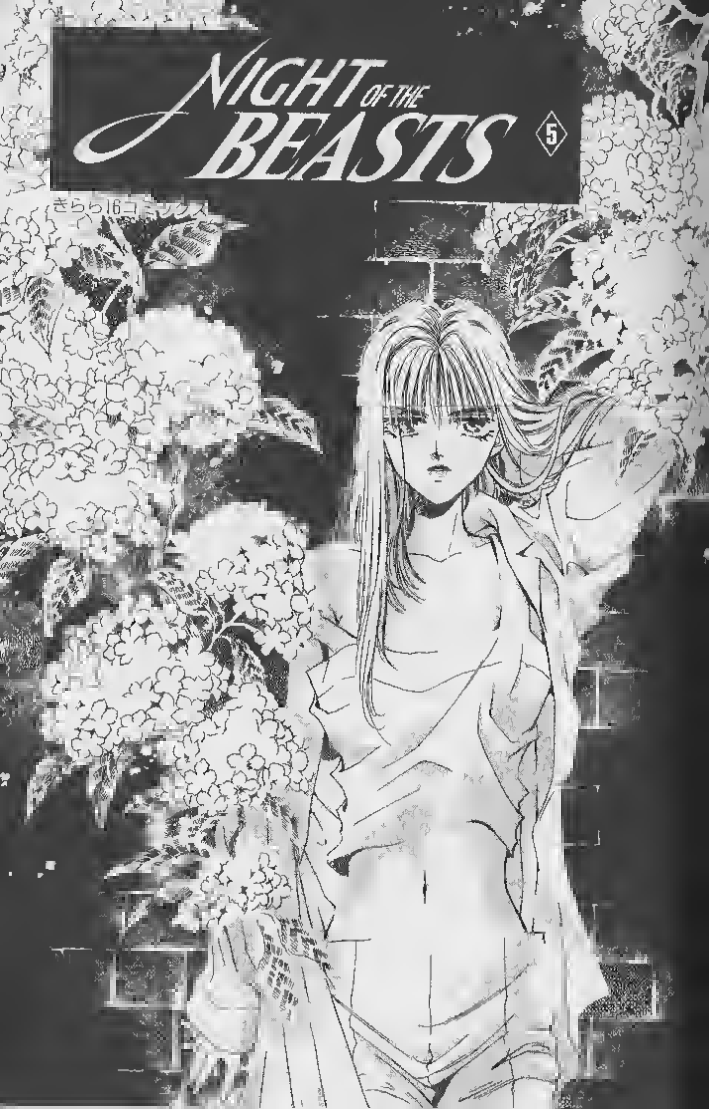

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

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NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

CHAPTER 20

STORY

Arin had a peaceful high school life, until she met the young man, Sakura, who is possessed by a ferocious demon. The beast within him was killed by a human named Mikage 400 years ago, but his bitterness survived, seeking revenge through slaughtering all of Mikage's descendents. There are now 4000 of these blood relatives, including Arin and Sakura, and one of the men who was after them.

Unable to repress the demon inside of him, Sakura killed the men hunting him, which shattered his control over the monster "Kagero". Starved for blood, it has begun its hunt for Arin and the relatives.

Their only chance is Kugun, the white demon inside of Arin. Leaving her home for the temple of blood relative Towako, Arin is shocked to find that a mass of blood relatives have gathered there, screaming and pleading with her to kill Sakura.

Arin has other plans. Desperate to save Sakura, she searches for him, only to have him suddenly appear before her, weak and wounded.

DAMN YOU.
MI-KAGE
...

GLEAM
AND WHEN THAT HAP-PENS
...I'LL KILL YOU!
WOOOO
I'LL COME BACK, I SWEAR TOOO!
DON'T THINK THE END'S HERE.

SPLAT
I'LL KILL YOU...
...AND EVERY HUMAN TIED TO YOUR BLOOD...
...I'LL DEVOUR!!

...THIS MONSTER'S DEAD!
THANKS TO MIKAGE-SAMA...
OH! SHE'S AWAKE!
-SAMA...
MIKAGE-SAMA...
IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING, MIKAGE-SAMA WILL...
IT'S KEPT US FROM HER BODY FOR THREE DAYS NOW...
SOMEBODY TIE UP THAT DOG.
YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?
KUGURI ...
ONE DAY, HE WILL REVIVE.
...I COULD NOT DESTROY HIS SOUL.
THOUGH I DESTROYED KAGARA'S BODY...

I HAVE NO POWER LEFT TO STOP IT.
FOLLOW HIM, KUGURI.
BUT I WILL GIVE YOU THE LAST OF MY STRENGTH.
AND BRING DOWN KAGARA...!
BRING HIM DOWN...
KU-GURI...

WHY DID THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN ...
...TO US?

MIKAGE-SAMA...?
SKIIIIINE
GLOW
MI-KAGE...
...KAGE.
WHAT
OH MY... GOD!

MIKA-
GE!!
I SWEAR
I'LL KILL
YOU!!!

SAKURA
GRIT
GRAB
WHIP

I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT YOU.
ABOUT HOW I CAN MAKE YOU DISAPPEAR.
THE ONLY WAY I'M DISAP-PEARING...
...IS AFTER I'VE DEVOURED YOU A...

HEY, YOU...
SQUEEZE
YESTERDAY, I HEARD SOMETHING STRANGE FROM KUGURI.
YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN IT TOO, NO?
"HOW THE DESTROYER HE ADD YEARS AGO, LIGHT HERE!"
I WISH YOU'D SHOW ME WHAT BROUGHT YOU ALL THE WAY HERE.
HOW MIKAGE KILLED YOU.
CHILL
RISE

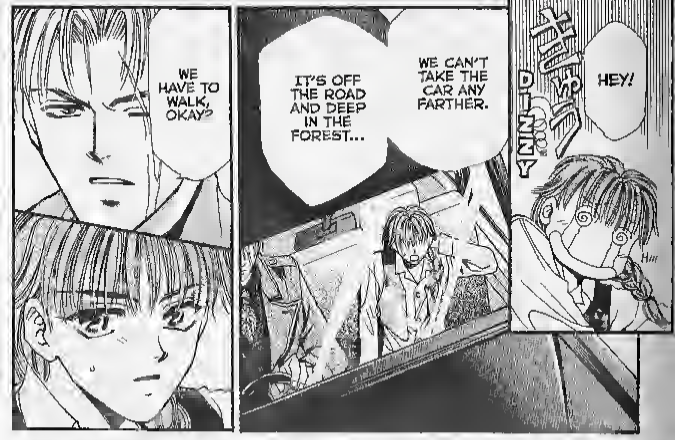
ASK MIKAGE.
THE BLOOD OF MIKAGE THAT'S IN YOU.
WHAT?
ALL OF A SUDDEN...
BOOM

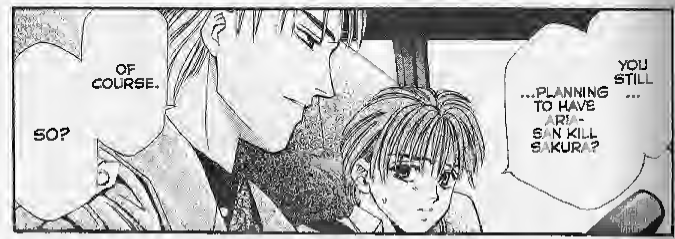
AROOOO
!
KUGURI.
MIKAGE.
KAGARA.
HIS ANGER'S SO INTENSE, IT'S DIZZYING.
THIS IS JUST LIKE LAST NIGHT.

WHAT...!
WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THEM!?
400 YEARS AGO...
WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THOSE THREE...!?

LET ME OUT!!
LET ME OUT!
WHERE'S ARIA YAMA-GUCHI?
GO AHEAD, BUT FIRST SHOW ME THE WAY.
IF YOU DON'T STOP THE CAR, I'LL JUMP OUT, DARN YOU!!
SO, SOME OF THE RELATIVES FROM THE TEMPLE FOLLOWED US, EH?
WHAT AN EYE-SORE...
YOU THINK I'D TELL YOU!? BLEEEH!!
!

I'M NOT USED TO DRIVING WITH JUST ONE EYE.
SORRY 'BOUT THAT.
HOLD ON TIGHT.
SQUEEEEEL
VEER
WAAAH!!
I'LL TALK ALREADY, JUST STOP IT!!
GYAAAH! I'LL TALK!!
WE FINALLY LOST THEM.
WHICH WAY NOW?


WE HAVE TO WALK, OKAY?
IT'S OFF THE ROAD AND DEEP IN THE FOREST...
WE CAN'T TAKE THE CAR ANY FARTHER.
DINY
HEY!


OF COURSE.
SO?
...PLANNING TO HAVE ARIA-SAN KILL SAKURA?
YOU STILL ...

ARIA-SAN HAS FEELINGS FOR SAKURA...
I FEEL BAD FOR HER...

NO, I...
I SHOULD JUST GIVE UP AND LET ALL OF THE BLOOD RELATIVES BE SLAUGHTERED? IS THAT IT?
THEN I SHOULD GET SOMEONE ELSE TO KILL HIM?
BOOM
WOOO
BOOM BOOM
WHA—

BOOM

CRUMBLE
CRUMBLE
CRUSH
LEAP

I DIDN'T EVEN GET A CHANCE TO AIM!
JUST AS I THOUGHT...
SHH
CRACK
KICK
YOU FOOL ...
YOU'RE JUST GOING TO LET YOURSELF DIE?
WITHOUT SAVING ANYONE.

SKID
SKID
SKID
LEAP
IT'S NO GOOD.
YOU CAN'T KEEP THIS UP.
ARIA-SAN.
HEE.
HEE.
WOOOSH
YOU H_VE TO FIND HIS...
...WEAK SPOT...
WOOSH

GYAAH!
THUD
AH...
NEI ...!
THOOOM

SOME-
THING TO
EXPLAIN
HIS RAGE.
THERE'S
SOME-
THING
MORE.
IT'S NOT
JUST
BECAUSE
HIS BODY
WAS DE-
STROYED.
COLLAPSE!
TCH!
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP

...WITH-OUT LETTING ANYONE DIE...
IF THERE'S A WAY TO GET THROUGH THIS...
AND THE RELA-TIVES...
FOR SAKU-RA.
THA DUMP
THA DUMP
...IT'S THIS.
THE KEY IS...
...WHAT HAPPENED 400 YEARS AGO.
ARIA-SAN!
TURN

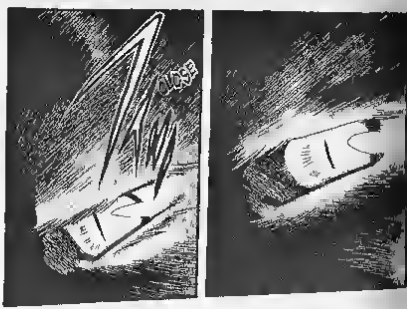
TOHRU...!
LOOK! YOU MIGHT LEARN SOMETHING HERE!
NEI SAW IT, SO THAT WE CAN...
Woooosh
WHAT HAPPENED 400 YEARS AGO...
...UNDER THAT TREE THERE!

Fwoosh
MIKAGE.
KUGURI.
KAGA-RA...

WHAT HAPP-ENED BACK THEN...?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

I CAN HEAR THE LEAVES RUSTLING...
WHERE AM I...?
WHAT AM I SEEING...?
SWOOSH!

GLARE
ヨロ



HE CAN'T SEE ME...?

THAT MEANS——
THE PLACE WHERE MIKAGE AND KAGARA FOUGHT.
THIS IS THE PLACE.
THIS STONE
THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT, BUT...

...IS KAGARA...?
THIS GUY..
GULP
THIS IS HOW HE LOOKED WHEN HE WAS ALIVE?
HE REALLY WAS A MONSTER ...
HE'S SO HUGE IT'S RIDICULOUS.
AND JET BLACK.
CHIRP CHIRP
TWITTER TWITTER
BUT...

...HE'S MUCH MORE GENTLE THAN THE KAGARA I KNOW...
!
PERK
WHO ARE YOU?

BLACK DEMON.
WHY DO YOU KEEP KILLING HUMANS?
THIS DOG'S NAME IS KUGURI.
SPLASH
AND MY NAME IS MIKAGE ...
IT'S MIKAGE ...!
AND KUGURI!!

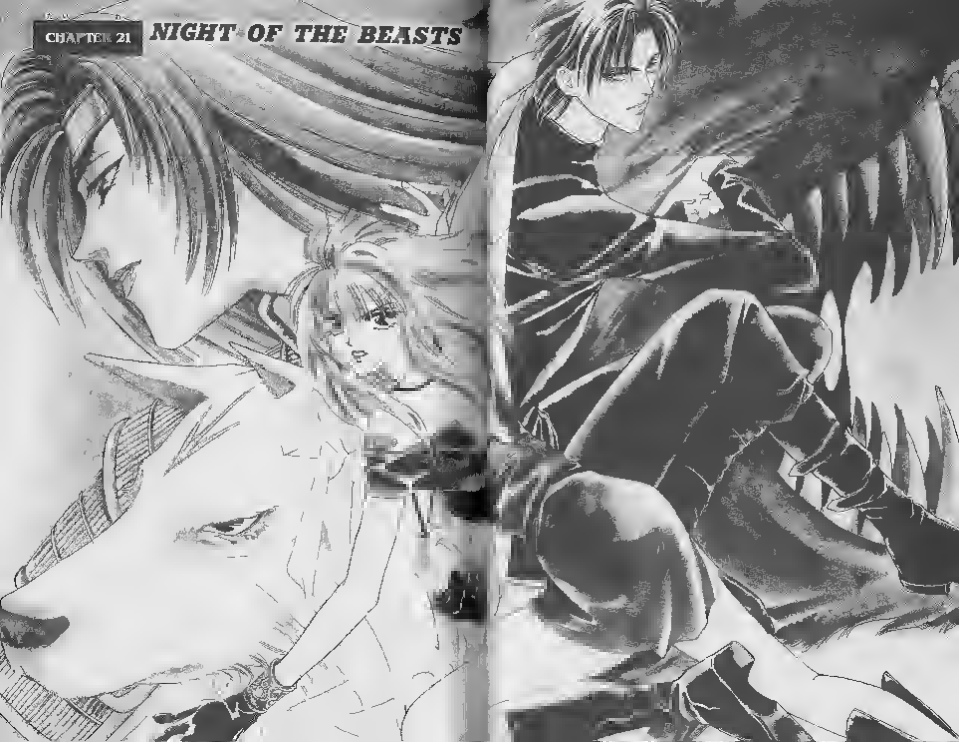
FREEZE
SSSHHH
THIS IS THE SENSELESS KILLING OF A BEAST...
ALL OF THIS ...
HUMAN CORPSES
CORPSES
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE...!
SIGH
FWOOO

THEY COME HERE TO BE KILLED.
DID YOU COME HERE TO KILL ME!?
ARE YOU ANOTHER ONE, MIKAGE OR WHO-EVER YOU ARE?
BUT WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...?
THE START...
...OF THEIR FIGHT.
THIS IS IT.
NO, I HAVEN'T.

I WON'T KILL YOU.
BUT YOU HAVE TO STOP SPILLING NEEDLESS BLOOD.
BELIEVE ME.
BLACK DEMON.

CHAPTER 21

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS



400 YEARS AGO, SOMETHING HAPPENED.
WHEN MIKAGE KILLED KAGARA.
JUST WHAT WAS IT THAT HAPPENED...
...IN THIS VERY SPOT?

BELIEVE ME, BLACK DEMON.
I WON'T KILL YOU.
YOU HAVE A NO-GOOD COLOR.
IF NOT WITH YOUR BLADE, YOU'LL ATTACK ME WITH SORCERY.
GRRRR
HH.
HH!
STAB
WHA—?

YOU KILL TOO EASILY AND WITHOUT REASON.
I WON'T HAVE TO USE MY SWORD OR MY POWER IF YOU CALM DOWN

IT'S CLEAR JUST BY LOOKING THAT YOU'RE NO ORDINARY HUMAN.
AND THAT'S NO DOG.
GRRR

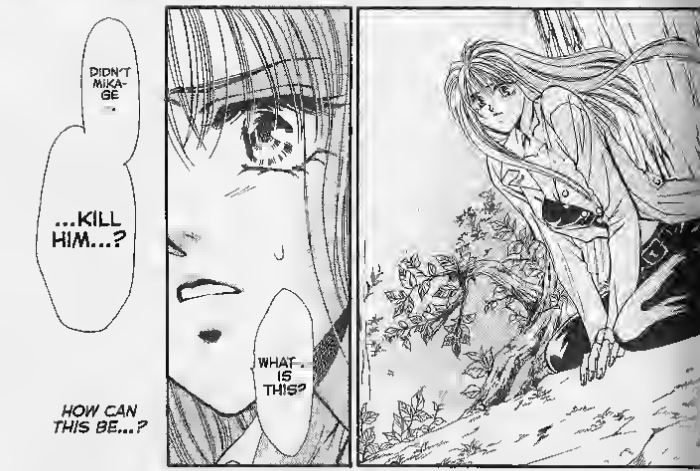
THEY COME HERE TO KILL ME.
I KILL TOO EASILY!

IT'S YOU HUMANS WHO HUNT ME.
NO MATTER WHERE I GO.
THEY SAY I WAS JUST BORN WRONG.
THEY CALL ME A FREAK.

BUT THE MORE OF THEM I DEVOURED, THE MORE THEY HUNTED ME.
AND I DEVOURED THEM, INSTEAD.
TIME AND AGAIN THEY CAME TO KILL ME.
SO I DEVOURED EVEN MORE.
AS TIME WENT BY, MY VERY FORM CHANGED...
...AND I'D BEEN ALIVE FOR 200 YEARS!
SPLASH

GRRR
DON'T BE AFRAID.
IT WAS YOUR DES-PERATE WISH TO LIVE THAT...
...TURNED YOU INTO THIS MISER-ABLE BEAST?

GRR...
DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY.


DIDN'T MIKA-GE...
...KILL HIM...?
WHAT... IS THIS?
HOW CAN THIS BE...?

RRRUMBLE
ポタ
PLIP
ポタ
"PLOP"
GRRRR
WHAT
FREEZE

I SHOULD HAVE DEVOURED YOU.
THE FIRST MOMENT I SAW YOU...
MIKAGE...

IF I HAD, THEN...
BLAM
GUH...!

AAARGH!!
BLAM
BLAM BLAM

BLAM
SLUDE
WHAT DID HE DO TO YOU!? AM I TOO LATE!?
TRMBL TRMBL
HUFF HUFF

YAMA-
GUCHI
...
ANSWER
ME!
TWITCH
RISE

CHILL
KUH ...!
I WON'T LET YOU DIE!

WH...WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING...
...ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?
WHERE'S THE WHITE DEMON!?
TELL ME...!!
N-NO, YOU CAN'T GO TO HER!!
RIGHT NOW, THEY'RE–
AH...!
BASH
WHERE ARE THEY...!?

MIKAGE AND KAGARA WERE TOGETHER FOR THAT LONG?
THEN WHEN DID...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
BZZT
BZZT
THE SEASON HAS CHANGED...
CHIRP CHIRP
...THEY KILL EACH OTHER?
YOU AND I ARE NOT SO DIFFERENT.
KAGARA..

MY POWER HAS REPULSED A LOT OF PEOPLE.
WHEN I WAS LITTLE I WAS ALWAYS BY MYSELF. IT WAS A LONELY CHILDHOOD.
I HAVE NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS ALONE.
ONLY NOW DO I FEEL THAT WAY.
NOW THAT I HAVE YOU AND KUGURI.

WHAT IS IT?
IS THERE SOMETHING ON MY FACE?
KAGA ...

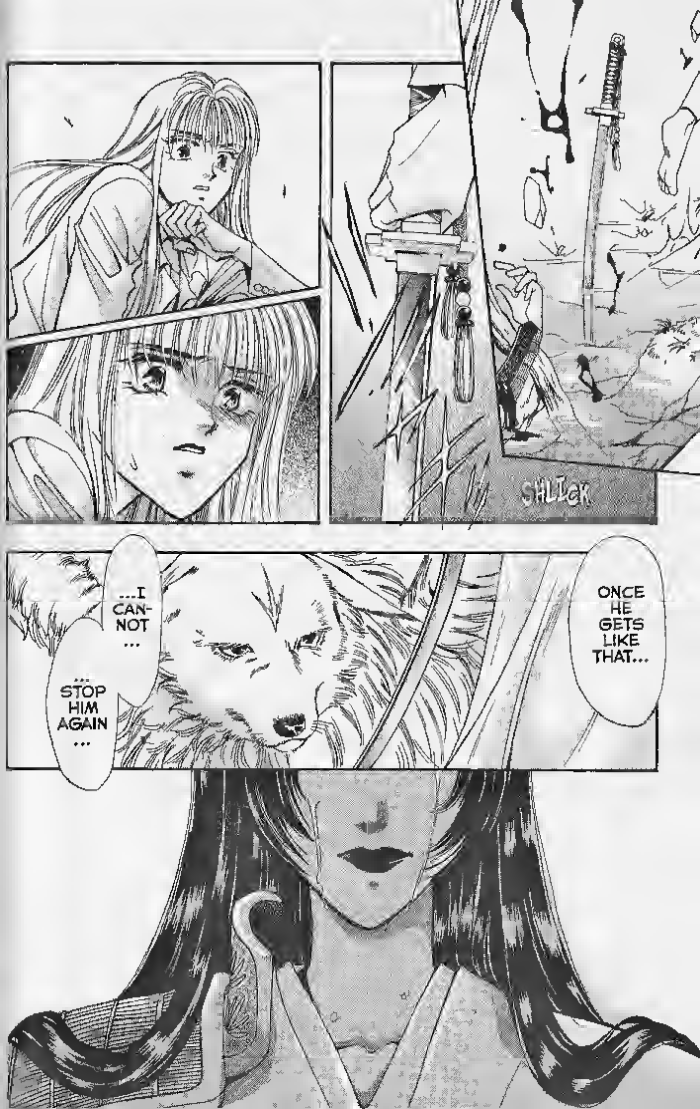
THUNK

WE DID IT!
WE GOT HIM!
!
IS MIKAGE-SAMA ALRIGHT?
WHAT!?
IT'S BEEN TWO MOONS SINCE SHE WENT INTO THE MOUNTAINS BY HERSELF.!
WE WERE SURE SHE'D BEEN DE-VOURED!
THESE HUMANS, THEY...!
BUT THIS IS JUST LIKE HER!
TAMING A BEAST LIKE THIS...!

NO!
I...
SO THIS WAS YOUR PLAN, MIKAGE?
!
WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE!
PLEASE GET DOWN!
STOP...
CRUSH
CRACK
...ANOTHER HUMAN AFTER ALL
YOU'RE JUST...
YOU GET ME UP.

NO, YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG!
BELIEVE ME, KAGA--
LUNGE

!
AROOOO


SHLICK
ONCE HE GETS LIKE THAT...
...I CAN-NOT ...
... STOP HIM AGAIN ...

LET'S GO.
KUGURI.

SSSSHHH!!!
SQUEAK!
YOU..
SO YOU FINALLY WOKE UP, EH?
I SWEAR, YOU'RE SUCH A HANDFUL...
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

A PROMISE NOT TO KILL.

KAGARA, WHO THOUGHT HE'D BEEN DECEIVED.

AND...

MIKAGE, WHO CRIED...

SSSSHHH
KAGA-RA!
WAIT, KUGURI!
GRRRR
PERK
!?
WHAT'RE YOU...

STOP IT.
YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND.
MIKAGE NEVER TRICKED YOU!
I SAW IT.
I SAW WHAT HAP-PENED 400 YEARS AGO.
BACK THEN, MIKAGE, SHE...
YOU SAW...?
HUH...
AND JUST WHAT DID YOU SEE?

MIKAGE LIED TO ME...
...AND MADE A GAME OF MY MURDER.
THAT'S THE ONLY REASON SHE CAME TO ME.
HOW DARE YOU CLAIM TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED ...
PLEASE TRY TO REMEMBER!
MIKAGE WAS CRYING BACK THEN!
REMEMBER?

I DON'T REMEMBER.
ALL I REMEMBER IS MIKAGE KILLING ME.
SSSSHHH
KAGA ...!
DON'T CALL ME BY THAT NAME!

EVEN AFTER LIVING FOR 200 YEARS?
I HAVE NO NAME.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
BLACK DEMON.
THEN
I'LL CALL YOU KAGARA
FROM THIS DAY ON, YOU ARE KUGURI'S BROTHER.

I DON'T ...
...RE-MEM-BER...
HEH ...
HEH ...
DURING THE PAST 400 YEARS... ...I'VE LOST A LOT OF MEMORIES.
I HAVE NO MEMORY ...
...OF WHY I TRUSTED HER...

OR OF HOW THAT LITTLE HUMAN...
...MANAGED TO STEAL MY HEART.

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

CHAPTER 22

スルー
SLITHER
THIS IS
ラブ・ゲーム
LOVE GAME

WAFT
SSSSHHH

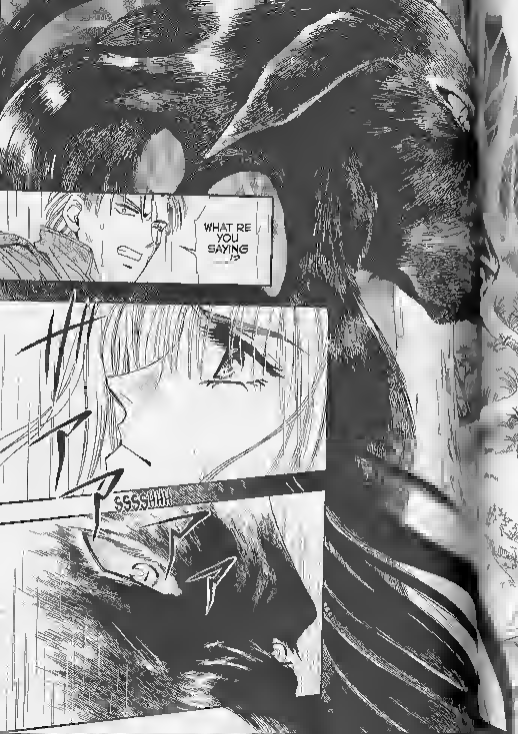
WAIT!
THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM USUAL

AH
...
OR OF HOW THAT LITTLE HUMAN
... MANAGED TO STEAL MY HEART.

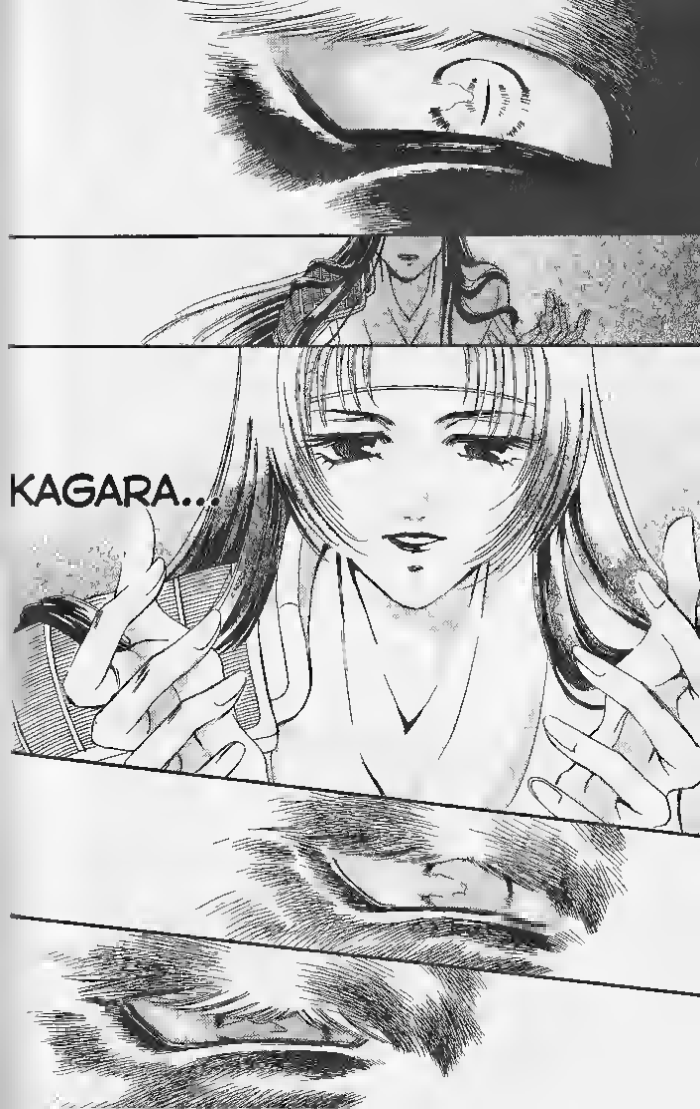
WHAT A HORRIBLE
IS THIS HIS TRUE FORM?
HE SAID HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN HUNTED BY HUMANS...
MIKAGE...
MIKAGE WAS THE FIRST PERSON WHO EVER LOVED HIM.
THE FIRST HUMAN HE EVER GAVE HIS HEART TO.
KAGARA...
...AND THAT SHE BETRAYED HIM.
HE BELIEVES MIKAGE KILLED HIM...

WHY AREN'T YOU DEAD!?
YOU MONSTER!
MO... THER!
...I UNDER-STAND.
HE TAUGHT ME.
THAT'S WHY YOU HATE MIKAGE...
HE SUFFERED, AND WAS SAD...
...AND HATED HER...
IT'S BECAUSE HE LOVED HER.

FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE...
...I WON'T FORGIVE YOU.
I CAN'T FORGIVE YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID TO SHIRO.
BUT...
HOW LONG CAN YOU KEEP THIS UP?
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S ENOUGH?
400 YEARS WORTH OF TEARS...


WHAT RE YOU SAYING
SSSSHHH

NOW, THEN.
COME TO ME, KAE'R...


KAGARA...

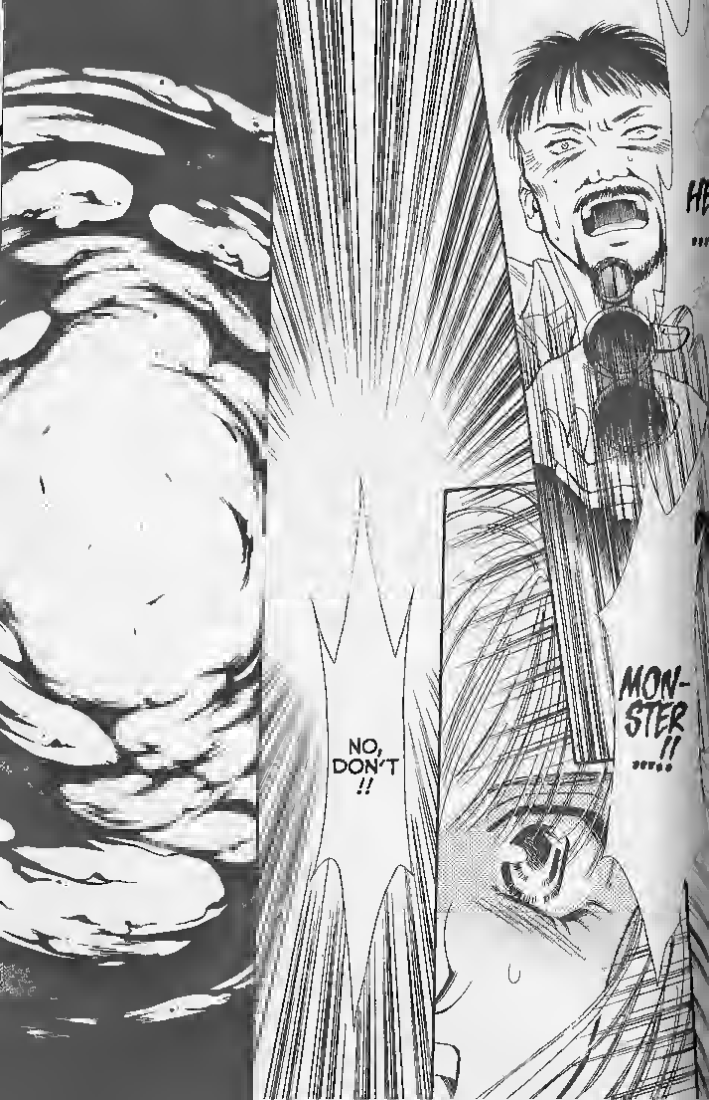
HE'S THE MONSTER THAT'LL DESTROY THE BLOOD-LINE.
BUT...
WHA ...!?
NG ...!
...THERE'S SUCH PAIN IN HIS EYES...

WHAT'S HE THINKING...?
SUDDENLY FREEING ME AFTER HAVING ME TRAPPED FOR SO LONG...
FALL
UUH...!
SA-KURA...

CAN IT BE...?
SA-KURA...
HAVE YOU FIGURED OUT HOW TO MAKE HIM VANISH...?

RUSTLE
WE FOUND 'ER!
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU'VE BEEN HIDING!?

IT'S THEM...!
WE'RE NOT LETTING YOU DISAPPEAR AGAIN!
YOU'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF US, RIGHT?
HEE HEE... HEE HEE HEE!
HEE...?
GLARE
WHAT IS THAT THING...?
WHA...


NO, DON'T !!
MON- STER !! ....!

BLAM
AH...
YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME AGAIN?
SLITHER
WOOOO

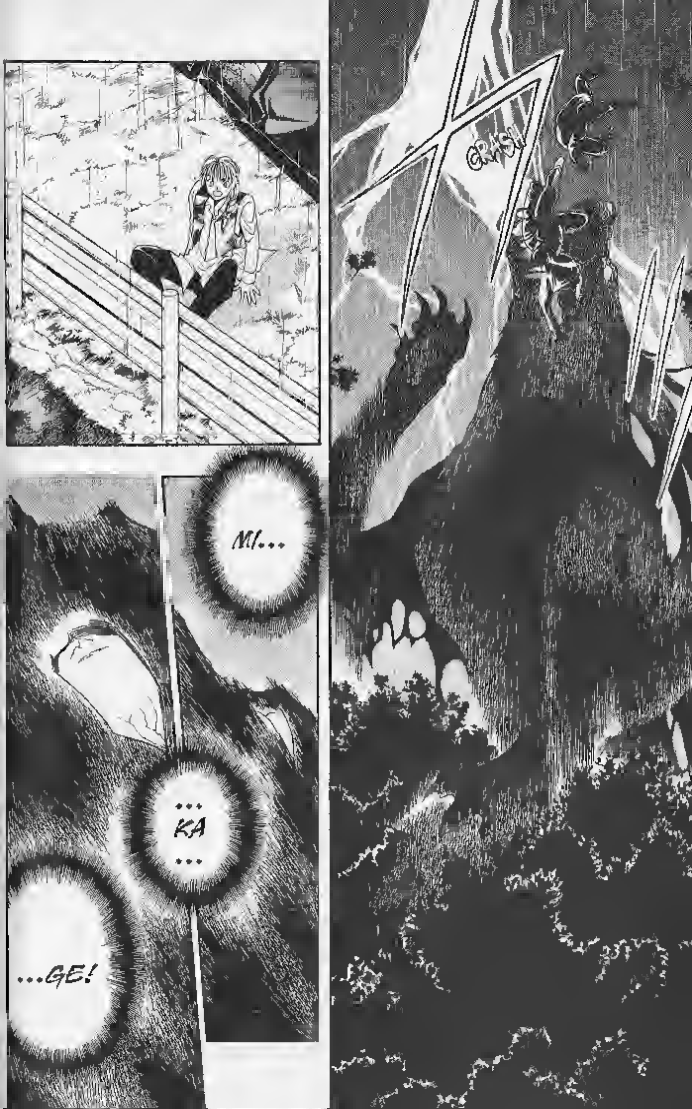
...USE THE SAME TRICK?
YOU'RE GOING TO...
EE...
YOU FIGURED THE SAME OLD TRICK WOULD WORK AGAIN?
BECAUSE THE DUMB MONSTER WOULD FALL FOR IT TWICE!!
EEE!!
LISTEN TO ME...
YOU'RE WRONG...
THIS IS...
...WHAT HAPPENED 400 YEARS AGO...
NO, THAT'S NOT...
I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOUR HUMAN LIES.
HURRY...
RUN.
WAIT!
ARIA.
SLIDE

AFTER ALL, I'M JUST A STUPID BEAST... RIGHT?
GO AHEAD AND LAUGH... NIKAGE.
GET DOWN ...
...AWAY!!
RUN...

LEAP
WOOOO

YIPE!
!
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
KU-
GURI!

HOW...
MIKA-GE!
MIKA-GE!
...DARE...
HE'S EVEN MORE ENRAGED THAN BEFORE ...!
MIKA-GE!!
...YOU!
AAH...!!
WOOSH


GRAOW!
MI...
...
KA
...
...GE!

NOW FOR THE OTHERS...
HUFF... HUFF...
HUH...?
SSSSHHH

RRRRRRUMBLE

YOU ALL RIGHT?
.....
DASH
H...
WE HAVE TO GO AFTER HIM...
TRMBL
TRMBL
AH...
COVER
I...
I...
I...
I...
...WAS HELPLESS AGAIN...

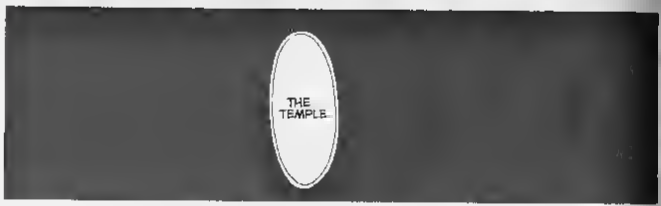
YOU CAN SAVE THESE PEOPLE FROM BEING SLAUGHTERED.
THAT'S ALL.

...NN!
GULP
THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT.

DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA. IT'S FOR THE BLOOD RELATIVES.
WE DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO WASTE CRYING.
THANKS. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE KIND.

I'M OKAY, I SWEAR
I'M OKAY...

IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GONE...
WHAT ABOUT HIM...?


THE TEMPLE

EVERY ONE WILL
IT'S TOO LATE THIS TIME EVERY ONE WILL
HHH
アアアアアア
SSSHHHH
CLING
HE'S HEADED FOR THE TEMPLE

KUGURI!
TO THE TEMPLE!
FOOOO
KUGU...
OH, THAT'S RIGHT, KAGARA HE...
...RI...?

FALL
FLUTTER
KU...
THE FAMILY'S LAST HOPE...

HE'S HERE.
CRASH

...TCH!
KU-GURI ...!!
GET UP...!
BASH
PLEASE, KUGURI ...!
THEY'LL DIE.
THEY'LL ALL BE SLAUGHT-ERED.

RISE
AII
!
STAND
AII
IV
II

NUZZLE
スリ
GOOD GIRL.
G...
LET'S GO, KUGURI!...

GRIT
LEAP
CLENCH
TH

PLEASE.
SAVE THEM.
HIGH HORD, KUGURI.
WE'VE FOUND A WAY...
THIS IS THE END...
...TO BRING KAGARA DOWN.

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

Old friends and old grudges are revealed, as Aria and Kuguri go up against the demon Kagara. Determined to get Sakura back, Aria wrestles with the idea that fighting may not be the only way to save him. Will this new tactic work, or simply leave her vulnerable to the ruthless demon still within Sakura?

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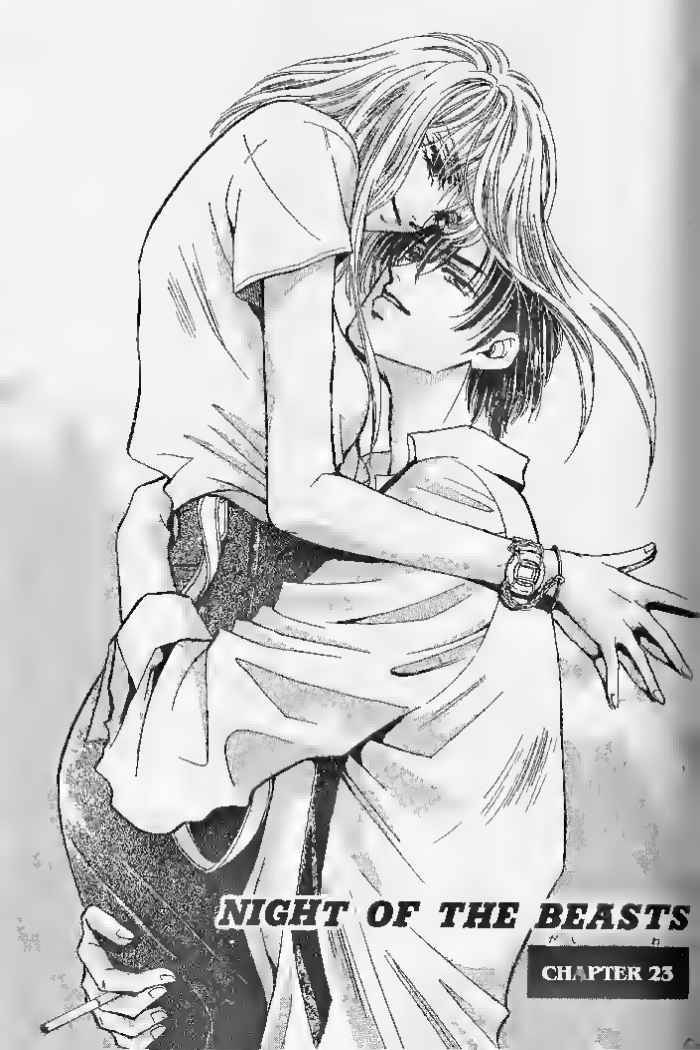


NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

CHAPTER 23

AROOOOO
CRUMBLE
CRUMBLE
GRAB
CRUMBLE
CRUMBLE

KAGARA, YOU FIEND.
YOU'VE GROWN TOO STRONG FOR SAKURA'S BODY, EH!?
TH-THIS FORM, IT'S...
AROOOO
HYOOSH!

SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
SLAM
ARIA!!

WOOO
BOOOOOM
DON'T DIE!
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE

WOOOOO
KAGARA!
THUD
THUD
RIS

AND 400 YEARS AGO... NEITHER DID MIKAGE!
KAGARA, LISTEN TO ME!
I SWEAR IT!
I NEVER TRIED TO TRICK YOU!
NEITHER DID MIKA-GE...!
I DIDN'T KNOW THOSE FOOLS WERE THERE!
PUSH
PUSH
GRRR!
CRASH
IT'S NO GOOD. HE WON'T LISTEN TO ANYTHING I SAY!
LISTEN TO ME!!
I GET HOW MIKAGE COULD ONLY STOP HIS RAMPAGE BY KILLING HIM.
AAH!

MIKAGE KILLED HIS BODY, BUT SHE COULDN'T KILL HIS SOUL.
THE ONLY WAY TO BRING KAGARA DOWN...
HIS SOUL COULD NOT BE DESTROYED, EVEN BY MIKAGE.
...IS TO SHOW HIM THE TRUTH OF MIKAGE'S HEART.
HIS SOUL THAT'S BEEN WEEPING FOR 400 YEARS.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, ARIA.
MAYBE IT WAS NEVER POSSIBLE TO DESTROY IT BY FORCE.
SA-KURA ...

HE'S SO MESSED UP, HE FORGOT TO LOCK UP MY CONSCIOUSNESS ...
WORDS ALONE WILL NEVER GET THROUGH TO HIM.
SHOCK
SAKURA ...!?
YOU CAN'T TALK HIM OUT OF THIS.
JUST LIKE...
HE'S SO PALE, LIKE HE'S LOST ALL THIS BLOOD.
JUST LIKE THOSE CORPSES I SAW...

ARIA...?
SHIVER
TH-DUMP
TH-DUMP
I'M BEGGING YOU.
PLEASE BELIEVE ME.
A THOUSAND DEATHS WON'T MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER!
I'LL KEEP SAYING IT, KAGARA!
MIKAGE NEVER BETRAYED YOU!!
CHOMP
IT'S NOT EVEN MIKAGE'S BLOODLINE THAT YOU WANT!!
TRUST MIKAGE...!

KAGARA...
GRAB
CRUSH

BAM
SA-
KURA
IF
YOU
MOVE
TOO
MUCH...
SAKURA
...
SLAM

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING!?
YOU TRYING TO KILL YOURSELF, ARIA!?
I TOLD YOU, WORDS WON'T WORK WITH HIM!
SLOW DOWN AND USE YOUR HEAD!!
HUFF
BUT IF...
KUH ...
HUFF
IF IT'S USELESS, THEN HOW LONG DO WE JUST WAIT!?

THIS IS NO JOKE!
THROUGH TOMOR-ROW? THE NEXT DAY?
YOU CAN'T TELL ME TO STAY QUIET AND LET PEOPLE DIE!
BY THEN HE'LL HAVE SLAUGHT-ERED HUN-DREDS!!
AND YOU, SA-KURA ...
I CAN'T LOSE YOU AGAIN...!

EVEN A LITTLE DAMAGE SHOULD HELP!
NOW'S THE TIME!
WE HAVE TO BRING HIM DOWN FOR GOOD!

SA-KURA ...
GRAB

I'M SORRY FOR YELLING AT YOU.
JUST SLOW DOWN AND STOP GETTING YOURSELF HURT.
PLEASE.

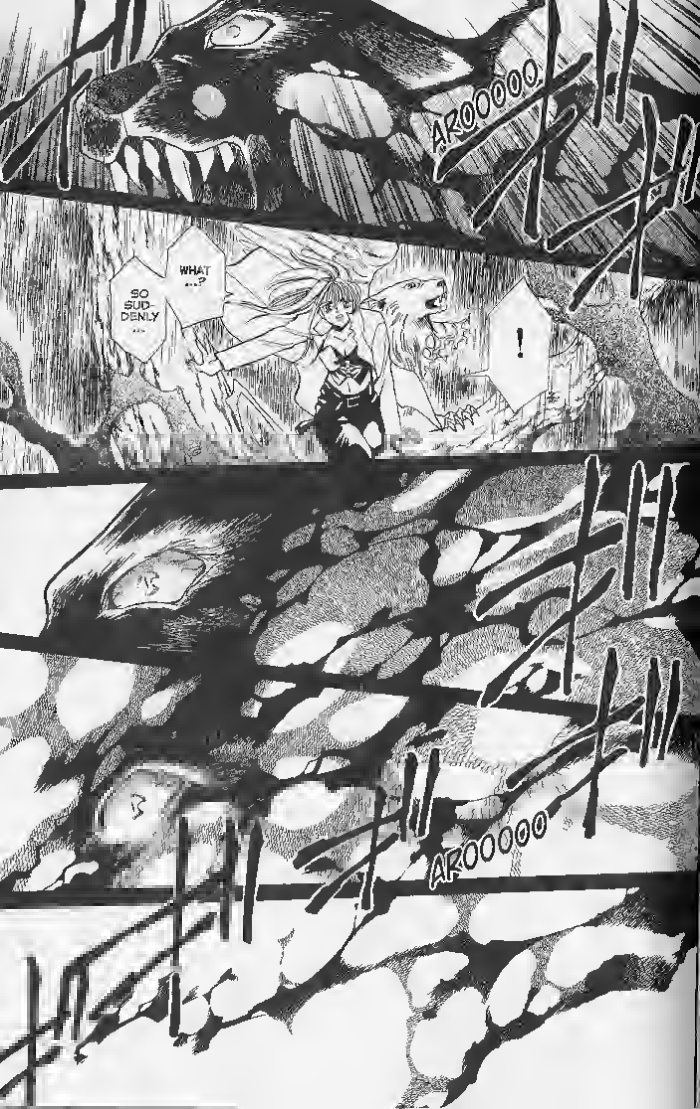
I'M ALL RIGHT.
I'M NOT THAT EASY TO KILL.
I'LL BE OKAY.
I'LL BE OKAY.
SOLDIER

ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
ZIP
KUGURI! WATCH OVER HIM.
LET HIM GET A LITTLE DISTANCE ...
...BUT DON'T LOSE HIM.

THOOOM
TO PROTECT ARIA...
...EVEN THIS LIFE THAT I USED TO THINK I COULD THROW AWAY ANY MOMENT...
...IS UN-BELIEVABLY PRECIOUS.
I WANT MORE TIME...
I WANT MORE TIME WITH YOU, ARIA...
BUT IT'S... MAYBE TOO LATE...
FSS ...

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS BODY'S ABOUT WORN OUT.
THE WHOLE TIME I WAS BLOCKING HIM, THIS WOUND WENT UN-HEALED...
HACK
COUGH
WHEEZE
NO MATTER HOW HARD I INHALE...
...I CAN'T CATCH MY BREATH...
PLEASE, SHIRO.

...TAKE ME WITH YOU, YET.
DON'T...
UNRAVEL
SHUDDER


AROOOOO
WHAT ...?
SO SUD-DENLY ...
!
AROOOOO

AROOOO
SKREEEECH
WHA...
WHAT'S THIS...?
AROOOO

TMP

LIMP
SAKU
...RA?

JIREN-SAMA, WHAT ON EARTH IS THAT!?
SAKURA...!
IT'S LIKE...
...A BLACK SHADOW'S RACING IN ALL DIRECTIONS!

MAYBE KAGARA'S LOST HIS STRONG-HOLD AND IS STRUG-GLING.
HE MAY HAVE LOST HIS HOST.
DON'T TELL ME..
YOU MEAN SA-KURA'S
SA KU RA!
WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT BEING OKAY!?
DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WOULDN'T DIE!?
WAKE UP!
I SAID WAKE UP!!
OPEN YOUR EYES ...!

WAKE ...
...UP ...!
...EASE.
PLEASE...
PLE... ASE...

PLEA...
EE...
EE...
HE'S DEAD.
MY HOST.
MY...
...BODY ...!
SWIRL
SWIRL
SWIRL

GIVE ME...
...A BODY!
GLEAM
YOU! GIVE ME YOUR BODY ...!!
LICK

WHINE
CHARGE
AROOOO

BAM
HADE

GLITTER
GIVE IT TO ME...
WOOOO
THOOM
AAAH ...
AH ...

SA-
KU...
RA...
SA-
KURA
...
SA-
KURA
...

FAR AWAY...
BUT MY BODY WON'T MOVE.
MY EYES WON'T OPEN...
ARIA'S CALLING ME.
I KNOW IT'S SELFISH...
...TO HAVE KILLED YOU AND THEN ASK TO BE SAVED...
WAIT.
I CAN'T DIE YET... SHIRO.

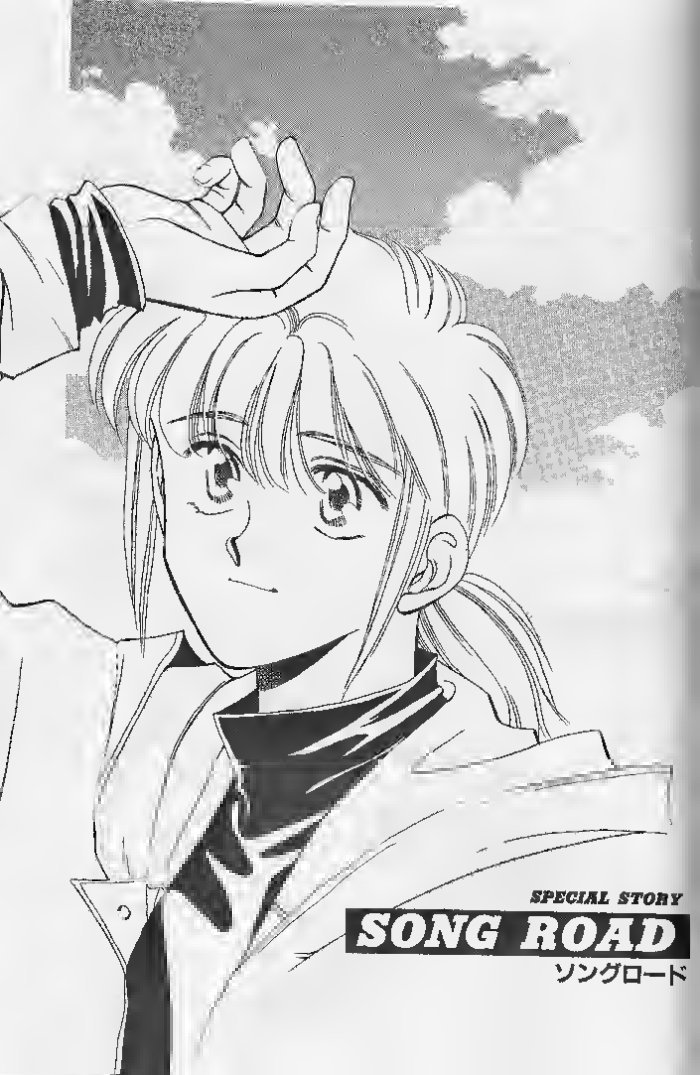
BUT EVEN SO...
EVEN SO...
QUIT GIVING ME A BAD NAME.
WHO SAID I'D BE TAKING YOU AWAY?
IF I DID, THAT GIRL'D PUNCH MY LIGHTS OUT.
I'LL ONLY SAY THIS:
YOU NEVER KILLED ANYONE.
THERE'S NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT.
SO GO ON LIVING WITHOUT BELIEVING THAT YOU DID.
SAKURA.

ALL RIGHT?
SHIRO.

LOOK, IT'S HERE.
IT'S SAYING THAT THE GIRL...
...NEEDS YOU.
SSSSHH!!!
GO TO HER, NOW.
SAKURA ...

YOU'RE ...
... ARIA'S ...
SSSSHHH!
LET'S GO.
I KNOW.
TO ARIA.

THE FINAL FACE-OFF.
IN VOLUME 6 OF
NIGHT OF THE BEASTS



SPECIAL STORY

SONG ROAD

ソングロード

LONG AGO THERE WERE MANY MORE HUMANS.
BUT THERE WAS A GREAT WAR AND IT BECAME DESERTED LIKE THIS.
THAT'S WHAT MY GRANDPA TAUGHT ME.
THIEF!!
2km
TH...
TH...

IT'S DANGEROUS FOR A KID TO BE WALKING AROUND HERE ALL ALONE!
HYAAH H HA HA! I'LL BE TAKING THIS!!
GALLOP
ぱから
ぱから
GALLOP
GIVE IT BACK! GIVE ME BACK MY BAG!!
へたっ
SIT
IT HAPPENED SO FAST..
IT WAS STOLEN
がくー
DROOP
...PICKPOCKETS ME...
TWO MONTHS ON THE ROAD, AND THE FIRST PERSON I MEET...

GRAND-PA, CAN I REALLY...
...LIVE IN THIS SCARY PLACE?
RUB
OH, WELL.
AT LEAST I STILL HAVE THE ONE THING MOST PRECIOUS TO ME...
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT
TMP
TMP
TMP
...SO I PUT IT IN THAT BAG...
OH, THAT'S RIGHT...
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT FALL OUT OF MY POCKET...

WHAT DO I DO? WHAT DO I DO?
HUFF
HUFF
I CAN'T CHASE SOMEONE WHO'S ON HORSE-BACK!
HUH?
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
!
...I HAVE TO GET BACK.
PUT PUT PUT
And I'm not even sure why she went.
BUT THAT'S THE ONE THING...
CLANG
PUT
PUT
PUT

I'M SORRY BUT THIS AIR BIKE HERE...
I NEED TO BORROW IT.
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, YOU LITTLE...!!
I'M SORRY, I'LL GIVE IT RIGHT BACK, I SWEA-
WAAAAAH!
HUH?
RR?!
SKID
FLING
VROOM

IT...
BROKE
FOOO
NO, YOU BROKE IT! YOU JERK!
DOOM
I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO BREAK IT!
I REALLY HAVE TO GET SOME-WHERE-
DON'T MESS WITH ME, YOU PUNK!
CRACK
CRACK
CRACK
YANK
UH... UM, ER...
STOMP

SO I CAN GET IT FIXED!
FORGET APOLOGIZING AND PAY ME BACK!!
YOU KNOW HOW PRECIOUS A BIKE IS THESE DAYS!!
I-I'm sorryyyy!!
...A SIMPLE "I'M SORRY" IS ENOUGH!? WELL!?
YOU THINK THAT AFTER STEALING AND BUSTING SOMEONE'S STUFF...
No I won't forgive you!
B..
BUT MY BAG GOT STOLEN AND NOW I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING...
EEEEK! FIRST A PICK-POCKET, NOW SEXUAL HARASSMENT!!
THEN, GIMME YOUR CLOTHES!!
This will fetch something!
YOU IDIOT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN SEXUAL HARASSMENT!?
HUH?

YOU'RE ...
...A CHICK?
NO DUH! WHAT PART OF ME LOOKS LIKE A GUY TO YOU!?
Quit staring!
WELL, WITH YOUR CLOTHES ON, ALL THE PARTS OF YOU DO.
Ally-oop.
ANYWAY, MY BIKE'S NOT BROKEN,
I'LL FORGIVE YOU.
Ahh!
BUT IF YOU'RE A GIRL, THAT'S ANOTHER MATTER.
HUH?
CHICKS IN PARTICULAR HAVE TO BE TREATED PRECIOUSLY.
AND WITH SO FEW PEOPLE LEFT...
...I CAN'T RISK MAKING ONE LESS.
I said stop it!
I miss them
EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT VERY WELL ENDOWED

WHAT'S YOURS?
NOW, THEN.
MY NAME'S SERAI.
?
YURI.
WELL THEN, YURI.
GET ON.
YOU NEED TO GET SOME-PLACE, DON'T YOU?
YOU'RE NICE ALL OF A SUDDEN.
I TOLD YOU, I'M AN ALLY TO THE LADIES.
A fem nist if you may
It's either fight or get crush 'em.
IT'S JUST GUYS WHO ARE ENEMIES AND EASY MARKS.
THADUMP
THADUMP
GOOD THING I'M A GIRL

PICK-POCKETED, EH?
THAT REMINDS ME, THERE'S A TOWN IN THIS DIRECTION.
HE MIGHT BE FROM THERE.
I'LL GET YOU INTO TOWN, BUT...
...I CAN'T GO HUNTING YOUR PICK-POCKET, TOO.
THAT'S OKAY, BRINGING ME TO THE TOWN IS MORE THAN ENOUGH.
THANK YOU.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D FIND HELP IN THAT DESERTED PLACE...
I'M GLAD I MET THIS GUY.
I'LL FIND HIM MYSELF.

THERE WAS A TON OF THEM FIFTY YEARS AGO
A RELIC FROM BEFORE THE WAR. THAT'S WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
I WAS LOOKING FOR SOME-THING.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, SERA? WHY WERE YOU IN THAT PLACE?
ME?
YOU WOULDN'T GET IT EVEN IF I EXPLAINED.
?
DON'T TELL ME, YOU'RE ...
SOME KIND OF COUNTRY BUMPKIN?
AND THERE'S SO MUCH FOOD!
Huh? It's small for a town.
WOW, THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE HERE.

I SWEAR, WHAT KIND OF PLACE DO YOU COME FROM?
THE BARTERING SYSTEM'S COMMON SENSE THESE DAYS.

I'M... I'M SORRY.
IT'S NO PROBLEM ...
I thought I heard you saying something.
She's a blep tame nlec
These are cheap.

DON'T JUST TAKE IT, YOU HAVE TO BARTER.
HUH!?
Are you her guard too?

WHAT IS IT?

FAR AWAY...
JUST ME AND MY GRANDPA LIVED TOGETHER ...

I FOUND YOU!!
IT'S YOU!
Th...this town's too small
AH...
GEH...
I HEARD THE WHOLE STORY, SO HERE I AM.
Heh heh heh I have no mercy when it comes to men
BLOCK
TCH.
OH WELL, I CAME THIS FAR.
WAAAAH!!
GIVE IT BACK! GIVE BACK MY BAG!!
YOU WAIT HERE, YURI—
GIVE IT BAAAACK!!

UWAH! YOU IDIOT!!
UWAH!
ボカ CLOBBER
GIVE IT BACK, I SAID! YOU DIRTY THIEF!!
ボカ CLOBBER
YOU ...!!
GRAB
YOU LITTLE BRAT!!
YOINK すかっ
VROOOM
WHAT HAP-PENED?
WHY DIDN'T YOU KILL HER, SHOJI?
LET GO!! LET ME GO!!
YOU NUT! WHAT KIND OF PERSON THROWS HERSELF AT A HUGE GUY LIKE THAT!?

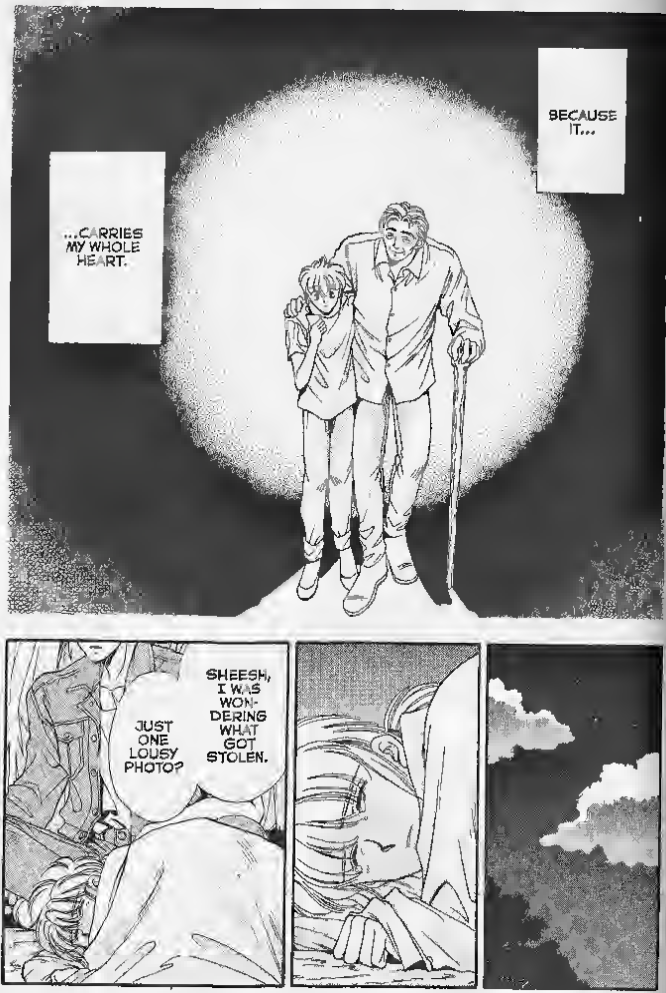
I KNOW, POP...
SHUT
I HAVE TOLD YOU REPEATEDLY TO KILL YOUR BATTLE OPPONENT IMMEDIATELY.
YOU STAY THAT SOFT THESE DAYS AND YOU'LL GET YOURSELF KILLED
BUT THAT KID...
WITH HER ATTITUDE, SHE MIGHT COME BACK HERE AT NIGHT...
BUT WHY'S SHE SO DESPERATE ABOUT THIS THING?
THERE'S NOTHING SPECTACULAR IN HERE.
YOU IDIOT!!
I'D FINALLY FOUND HIM!!
WHY!? WHY'D YOU GET IN MY WAY!?

IF I'D LEFT YOU, HE'D HAVE KILLED YOU!
I SAVED YOUR BUTT, SO BE GRATEFUL!
KILLED... ME?
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT!!
NOWADAYS, EVERYONE DOES WHAT IT TAKES TO STAY ALIVE!
THEY STEAL FROM EACH OTHER WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT!
AND KILL ANYONE WHO GETS IN THEIR WAY!
I SWEAR, WHAT KIND OF BUBBLE WERE YOU RAISED IN!?
FREEZE
SOB
ヒック
HIC

SO JUST GIVE IT UP.
PAT
STILL, I AM SORRY FOR WHAT HAP-PENED.
ALL YOUR FOOD WAS STOLEN? I CAN GO BARTER SOMETHING FOR YOU.
WAS THERE SOME-THING... PRECIOUS TO YOU IN THAT BAG?

WHEN I DIE...
YURI...
...GO TO WHERE THERE ARE MORE PEOPLE.
MY DEAD ...
...GRAND-PA'S PHOTO...
YOU'LL BE TOO LONELY BY YOURSELF IN THIS PLACE WHERE THERE'S NOTHING
ME...
AND MY GRANDPA....

EVERYONE BESIDES US WHO LIVED THERE...
...DIED OF A SICKNESS THAT SPREAD THERE WHEN I WAS LITTLE
HE RAISED ME ALL MY LIFE.
BUT NOW...
...MY GRANDPA'S...
...GONE.
YURI, I WANT YOU TO HAVE THIS.
IT'S A PHOTO OF ME WHEN I WAS YOUNG
AS LONG AS YOU HOLD ONTO THIS...
...I'LL BE BY YOUR SIDE.

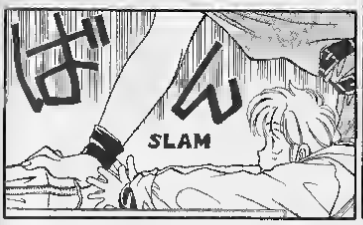

BECAUSE IT...
...CARRIES MY WHOLE HEART.
SHEESH, I WAS WONDERING WHAT GOT STOLEN.
JUST ONE LOUSY PHOTO?

IT MIGHT SEEM THAT WAY..
..BUT IT MUST'VE BEEN REALLY PRECIOUS TO HER
SO, THE LAST MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY DIED...
STROKE
...AND LEFT YOU ALL ALONE, IS THAT IT?
THEN STARTING NOW...
...HOW ABOUT I STAY BY YOUR SIDE?
..THERE'S NOTHING SEXY ABOUT HER AT ALL..
BUT I GOTTA ADMIT...
SNOOOORE

IT'S MORNING?
CHIRP CHIRP
ZZZ
CHIRP
I WAS GOING TO GO BACK THERE DURING THE NIGHT...
WHAT DO I DO? HE MIGHT BE AWAKE BY NOW...
CREAK
AH IT'S OPEN
!

SNEAK
THANK GOODNESS, IT'S ALL RIGHT!

THERE IT IS!


ばん
SLAM

I KNEW YOU'D COME BACK, BRAT.
I WAS EXPECTING YOU, SO I WAS READY.

IT'S AWFUL HEAVY AND THICK FOR A PHOTO...
THIS THING?
Give it back! Give it back!!
PHOTO?
Oh, yeah—
GIVE IT BACK!
YAAAWN
BUT YOU CAME A LITTLE LATER THAN I THOUGHT.
I stayed up all night, waiting...
G...
IF YOU WANT IT, YOU CAN HAVE THE BAG!
PLEASE JUST GIVE ME BACK MY PHOTO!!
DID YOU FORGET WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, PLAYING AROUND SHOJI?
!
SHE'S JUST A LITTLE SQUIRT, I DON'T WANNA DO THAT...
BUT, POP.
THUNK

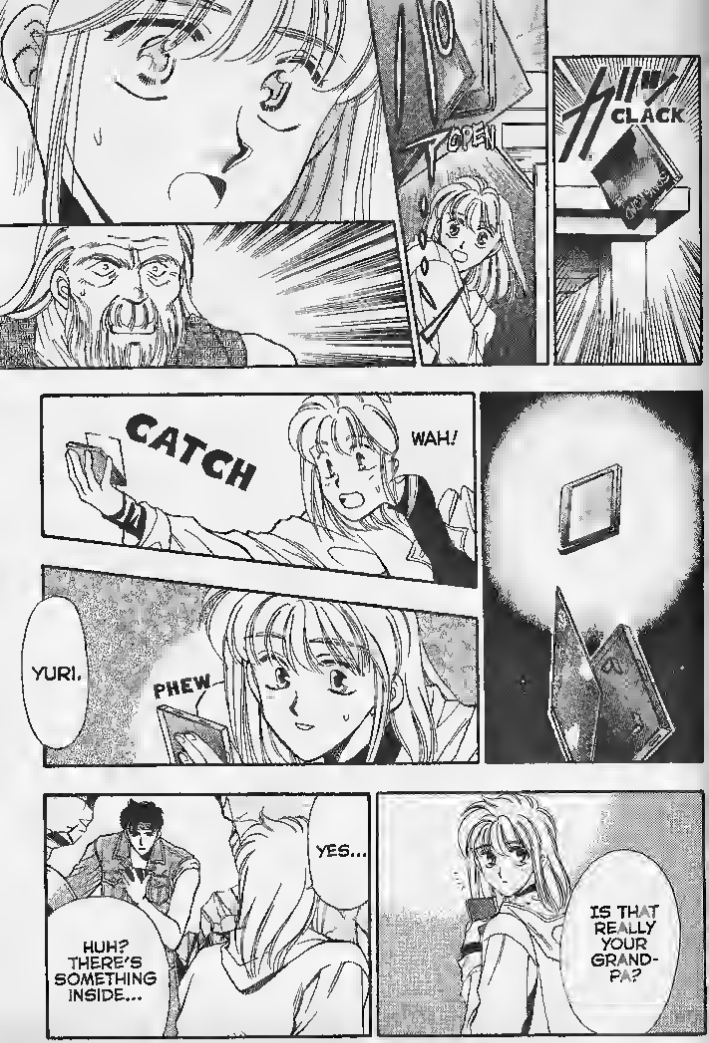
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, YOU PUNK...!!
GYAAH!
Got it!
GRAB
NOW I GET YA, POP!
SHE SNUCK INTO OUR HOUSE, SO SHE SHOULD EXPECT THAT MUCH!
!
LET...
SHUT UP!
LET ME GO...
GRAB
EEK ...!

THEY STEAL FROM EACH OTHER WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT!
AND KILL ANYONE WHO GETS IN THEIR WAY!
TAKE YOUR PUNISHMENT, YOU SNEAKY CAT!!
AH ...
SE...
SERAI...

BOOM
!
WHO'S THE THIEF!?
VROOM
YOU BLOCK-HEAD!
WAAAH! WH-WHAT IS THIS!?

THAT BRAT'S MY PROPERTY.
HOW DARE YOU TOUCH HER WITHOUT PERMISSION!!
Y... YOU'RE THAT GUY FROM YESTER-DAY!
SERA...
HUH.. YOUR PRO-PERTY ...?

I JUST DECIDED.
TMP
BAM
OUTTA THE WAY! TAKE THAT!!


CLACK
OPEN
CATCH
WAH!
PHEW
YURI.
YES...
HUH? THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE...
IS THAT REALLY YOUR GRAND-PA?

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP
YOUR GRANDPA.
HE WAS A REALLY FAMOUS GUY.
SHLICK
HOP ON, YURI!!
PULL
VROOOO

SONG ROAD
TRUE BLUE
THIS IS..
ARE YOU KIDDING ME, YOU DON'T KNOW?
IT'S..
..WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.
IT COULDN'T BE

...MUSIC!!
IT'S WHAT THEY CALLED BEFORE THE WAR...
Everyone was silent, God forbid
WH... WHAT'S ALL THIS NOISE?
DOM DOM
IT'S NOT THE ENGINE, THAT'S FOR SURE!
...ROAD?
SONG...
THIS... SONG...
WHAT IS IT, GRANDMA?

YAAA-HOOOO!!
HOW!? WHERE'S THAT NOISE COMING FROM!?
They slowly put their arms around each other
THIS.. THIS SOUNDS LIKE MY GRANDPA'S VOICE!!
ブオオオオ
TO BE MORE ACCURATE, IT'S CALLED A MINI DISC.
IT CAN HOLD HOURS OF SOUNDS AND VOICES.
IT'S HERE. I PUT IT INSIDE.
IT'S COMING FROM THAT PICTURE OF YOUR GRAND-P.
true Blue

BAM
VROOOM
ブオオオ
WAIT, YOU TOO!?
YEAH, I WAS A HUGE FAN!
BOOM ガン
BOOM ガン
It's Jewel!
WH... WHAT IS THAT!?
WHAT'S THAT NOISE!?
THERE'S NOBODY FROM BEFORE THE WAR WHO DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT SONG ROAD!
THIS MAKES ME SO HAPPY!
TO THINK I'D MEET ANOTHER FAN RIGHT IN THIS VERY TOWN!
Ohhh
They were the hottest thing back then
Oh, but this brings me back!
? ? ?

BEING BORN AFTER THE WAR, YOU PROBABLY DON'T UNDERSTAND, BUT..
THAT'S ENOUGH, SHOJI.
TH... THOSE JERKS!
I WON'T FORGIVE THEM...!
WHAT'S WITH YOU, TELLING ME TO STOP NOW OF ALL TIMES!!
I WAS A BIG FAN, GOT IT?
QUIET, YOU!
LONG AGO, THEY ONLY SANG SONGS OF PEACE
THE BAND CALLED "SONG ROAD."
CLATTER

TO BE REMINDED OF THEIR SONGS NOW...
IT CARRIES ...
...MY WHOLE HEART.
GRANDPA...

HOW ABOUT WE GO TO THE NEXT TOWN OVER?
WE CAUSED A BIG RIOT AT THE LAST ONE.
...I NEVER COULD FIND ONE...
My grandma installed the player in my bike
AH...
YOU SAID THIS WAS WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR BUT...
BUT, AM I GLAD.
MY GRANDMA TOLD ME ALL ABOUT THESE THINGS, BUT...
IT'S TOO LATE. I DON'T NEED IT, NOW.
...I'M SORRY.
I CAN'T GIVE THIS TO YOU.

I HAVE YOU, DON'T I?
I MEAN IT. YOU CAN'T HAVE THIS PHOTO.
SHE DOESN'T GET IT...
I'M SORRY, DID I MAKE YOU MAD, SERA!?
NAH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. I'M NOT MAD.